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'Kanpo' life insurance benefits remain unpaid in as many as 800,000 cases

Yomiuri:

Agriculture ministry last year secretly surveyed employees illegally engaged in full-time labor union activities

Nikkei:

Government, ruling parties eye 5 PERCENT redemption from state coffers in consumer purchases of energy-saving electrical appliances

Sankei:

Government, ruling coalition to include in supplementary budget support for J-ALERT system consolidation

Tokyo Shimbun:

Government, ruling parties to expand subsidies for new cars to regular cars

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50 PERCENT of greenhouse gas in 2007 emitted by 166 business places

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students

3) Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei)

Prime Minister's schedule, April 7

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)

April 8, 2009

09:02

Cabinet meeting in the Diet building. Land, Infrastructure and Transport Minister Kaneko remained. Former Internal Affairs Minister Masuda, Finance Minister Yosano and Chief Cabinet Secretary Kawamura were present. Then met with METI Minister Nikai.

10:15

Met with Chairman Hamada of Nagoya Port Administration Management Union Assembly.

10:59

Arrived at the private residence in Kamiyama-cho.

11:44

Arrived at the Kantei.

12:50

Legislators' meeting in the Diet building.

13:03

Lower House plenary session.

13:36

Met with Youth Division Director Inoue, Lower House member Yasutoshi Nishimura and Daishiro Yamagiwa.

13:39

Lower House plenary session.

13:44

Met with former Prime Minister Abe and Chairman Furuya of the LDP Special Commission on Measures to Deal with the Abduction Issue

13:55

Met with former Secretary General Nakagawa, chairman of the supra-partisan Ocean Policy Basic Law Follow-up Study Group, and Lower House member Oguchi at the Kantei.

14:53

Met with Kawamura.

15:46

Met with Chairman Imazu of the LDP's Group to Rebuild Japan Vigorously.

16:32

Gave a letter of appointment to Special Advisor to the Cabinet

Masuda. Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Matsumoto, Konoike and Uruma were present. Then met with Government Representative Yachi.

17:33
Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy meeting.

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18:57
Dined with Chubu Economic Federation Chairman Fumio Kawaguchi, Nagoya Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Kunihiko Okada and Chubu Association of Corporate Executives Chairman Kawamura.

20:52
Met his secretaries at Imperial Hotel Bar "Imperial Lounge Acqua"

22:29
Arrived at the official residence.

4) U.S. decision to stop F-22 fighter project to affect ASDF's FX selection

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 3) (Excerpts)
April 8, 2009

The U.S. government decided on April 6 to stop producing the state-of-the-art F-22 fighter. With this decision, it has become certain that the F-22 will be removed from the list of candidate models for the Air Self-Defense Force's (ASDF) next-generation mainstay fighter (FX) that is to replace the aging F-4 fighter.

5) U.S. decision to end F-22 production upsets Japan's air defense strategy; FX selection returns to square one

ASAHI (Page 4) (Excerpts)
April 8, 2009

Hisashi Ishimatsu

The U.S. Defense Department's decision to end placing orders for the F-22 Raptor fighter jet has forced Japan's Defense Ministry and the Self-Defense Forces to give up their plan to introduce the state-of-the-art stealth fighter, which they defined as the leading candidate for the country's FX next-generation mainstay striker.

There is a possibility that the scheduled procurement of the FX would be delayed further, having an impact on a review of the country's air defense strategy as a result.

In addition to the F-22, the Defense Ministry is checking the performance of the F-15FX and the FA-18 of the United States; the F-35 of the United States, Britain and other countries; the Eurofighter of four European countries, including Britain and Germany; and the Rafale of France. The ministry is expected to hurriedly determine the FX from among the five models.

6) Chief Cabinet Secretary Kawamura: End of F-22 production will not affect Japan's defense capability

SANKEI (Page 9) (Full)
April 8, 2009

Chief Cabinet Secretary Takeo Kawamura indicated in a press conference yesterday that U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates' announcement to end producing the F-22A would have no impact on Japan's overall defense buildup program. Kawamura said: "Our country's defense buildup program will not change depending on whether or not to acquire the F-22."

7) North Korean missile splashed into projected oceanic area after

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flying 3,200 km

YOMIURI (Page 1) (Excerpts)
April 8, 2009

Ahead of launching a ballistic missile on Sunday, North Korea notified that the missile's second booster would fall into Pacific waters between 2,150 kilometers and 2,950 kilometers east of the Boso Peninsula, Chiba Prefecture. According to the analysis conducted by the Defense Ministry based on data from the Maritime Self-Defense Force's Aegis-equipped vessels and the U.S. military that tracked the trajectory of the ballistic missile, the North Korean missile finally splashed into waters in the projected area closest to the Japanese archipelago, it was learned yesterday. As a result, the missile is believed to have flown about 3,200 kilometers from the missile base in Musudan-ri. The ministry is conducting a detailed analysis.

8) U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff vice chairman calls North Korean missile launch a failure

SANKEI (Page 2) (Full)
April 8, 2009

Takashi Arimoto, Washington

General James Cartwright, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, clearly said in a press conference on April 6 that North Korea's missile launch on April 5 ended in failure. He said: "The technology they were seeking after the first two failures was the ability to stage - in other words, transition from one stage of (rocket) boost to the next, but they failed."

The vice chairman also indicated that the missile's second and third stages fell into spots that were close to one another, adding that they were beyond recognition.

Meanwhile, a missile expert speculated that the third stage was a disguise and that it did not carry a satellite or propulsion fuel.

9) Government source: Retrieving Taepodong booster in waters off Akita difficult

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
April 8, 2009

The first-stage booster of the Taepodong-2 missile launched by North Korea on Sunday which the country claimed to have carried a satellite is believed to have splashed into waters off Akita Prefecture. A government source revealed a view yesterday that retrieving the booster is difficult, saying: "The booster seems to be lying at a depth of about 3,000 meters. I wonder if it is retrievable." The government is split over the booster's retrieval. A lack of unity might become a problem.

10) Foreign Minister Nakasone stresses policy of aiming at adopting new UNSC resolution

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
April 8, 2009

Yesterday at the Foreign Correspondents Club of Japan, Foreign

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Minister Hirofumi Nakasone stressed that Japan would aim for a new United Nations Security Council resolution condemning North Korea for its recent launch of Taepodong-2 missile. He said: "It is important that the UNSC will take an appropriate action to make North Korea realize that its provocative act will have the consequences."

Nakasone took a position that Pyongyang's missile launch this time was a violation of UNSC resolutions. He then pointed out: "If nothing is done against the violation, the UNSC will lose its reliability and authority."

11) Lowe House endorses resolution condemning North Korea

SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)
April 8, 2009

The House of Representatives yesterday endorsed a resolution at a plenary session condemning Sunday's missile launch by North Korea by a majority of lawmakers from the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), the New Komeito, and the People's New Party. The Japanese Communist Party voted against the resolution, while the Social Democratic Party abstained from voting.

The resolution jointly submitted by the LDP and the New Komeito states: North Korea launched a missile, not a flying object. The North's missile launch is a clear violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions and the act cannot be tolerated. The resolution calls for the government to strengthen its sanctions against Pyongyang and urges the UNSC to adopt a new resolution.

12) Upper House to endorse today resolution condemning North Korea's missile launch

ASAHI (Page 4) (Excerpts)
April 8, 2008

The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), and the New Komeito agreed yesterday to adopt a resolution condemning Sunday's missile launch by North Korea by a majority of lawmakers from the three parties at a plenary session today of the House of Councillors. The resolution also calls for the government to impose additional economic sanctions on the North and for the United Nations Security Council to adopt a new resolution. The contents of the resolution are the same as those of the resolution endorsed yesterday by the House of Representatives.

13) Senior LDP member: "Japan should go nuclear"

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Excerpt)
April 8, 2009

In an executive meeting of the Liberal Democratic Party yesterday, Goji Sakamoto suggested in reference to North Korea's missile launch on April 5 that Japan also should arm itself with nuclear weapons. He said: "They (North Korea) have nuclear weapons. Japan can say that it will possess nuclear weapons." He then referred even to the possibility of Japan withdrawing from the United Nations, according to informed sources.

14) Hosoda: Rice, Hill were weak-kneed toward North Korea

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SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)
April 8, 2009

In a meeting of the Liberal Democratic Party's Executive Council yesterday, Secretary General Hiroyuki Hosoda sharply criticized former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, who served as chief U.S. envoy to the six-party talks, for their approach to North Korea over its nuclear development. He said: "They were weak-kneed. Their approach was wrong." It is unprecedented for a senior ruling party member to criticize certain high-ranking U.S. officials by name.

Hosoda said that North Korea "only exploded a cooling tower at its reactor complex" as a result of efforts by the six-party talks, emphasizing that little progress has been made so far. He also indicated the view that Washington's "lenient" attitude has made North Korea more selfish, saying: "It has yet to be revealed how many nuclear bombs it has and to what extent its uranium-enrichment program has advanced."

15) Hard-line arguments heard in LDP -- "U.S. dialogue policy line is questionable," "Japan should opt out of the UN or possess nuclear weapons"

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)

April 8, 2009

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Secretary General Hiroyuki Hosoda during the party's General Council meeting on April 7 criticized former U.S. Secretary of State Rice and Assistant Secretary of State Hill, who served as the top envoy to the six-party talks, for adopting a policy line of attaching importance to talks in dealing with North Korea. He noted, "The policy line Rice and Hill adopted was weak-kneed."

Hosoda at an earlier meeting of party executives also questioned the achievements of the six-party talks, saying: "All the six-party talks have so far is that a cooling system of North Korea's graphite reactor was blown up. How many nuclear bombs that nation possesses or to what extent its uranium enrichment has made headway have yet to be determined." He then made a hard-line statement against North Korea: "It is clear that Japan is being exposed to a nuclear threat. The government lacks a sense of crisis."

Goshi Sakamoto, chief of the LDP Organization Headquarters, during the meeting also put forward an argument in favor of Japan going nuclear, noting, "If Japan's stance is not accepted at the UN, we should say that Japan is ready to opt out of the UN or it will possess nuclear weapons."

16) Yamasaki concerned about hard-line argument against North Korea

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)
April 8, 2009

Referring to a hard-line argument in favor of Japan possessing the capability of striking an enemy base, former Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Secretary General Taku Yamasaki in a speech given at a party of his faction urged restraint, noting: "I am very concerned that a bullish view like that of the one-time Kwantung army (an army group of the now-defunct Imperial Japanese Army) in the past will

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become rampant. We should discuss the issue in a cool-headed manner." Referring to the firing of a missile by North Korea, Yamasaki said, "I take it seriously." He also said, "Views such as that Japan should possess weapons capable of attacking the enemy's missile launching base or if they are nuclear-armed, Japan should also go nuclear are an argument that will lead mankind to annihilation. I want to warn against such views heard in the party."

17) Defense chief advocates discussing enemy base strike option

AKAHATA (Page 2) (Full)
April 8, 2009

In connection with the issue of North Korea's recent launch of a rocket, Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada, sitting in yesterday on the House of Councillors Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, clarified that positive discussions should be held on the advisability of allowing Japan to have the capability of striking enemy bases. "It is important that wide-ranging discussions are held," Hamada stated before the committee. He was replying to a question asked by Katsuhito Asano, a House of Councillors member of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party.

Asano referred to the option of striking enemy bases or the notion of entering North Korean territory to raid its missile launch pads if North Korea launched a Nodong missile at Japan. Asano asked if Hamada would consider changing the Self-Defense Forces' role of defending Japan and U.S. Forces Japan's role of striking enemy countries.

Hamada stated that, speaking from the SDF's equipment systems, it would be "extremely difficult" at this point to carry out a militarily effective strike on an enemy base. Meanwhile, he also stated: "We need a political judgment when it comes to the question of whether or not to have equipment systems for the purpose of striking enemy bases. Given such factors as the advancement of military and scientific technologies as well, it is important to

hold wide-ranging discussions in Diet deliberations and on other occasions from the perspective of what we should do to defend our country."

18) Coordination underway for a visit to U.S. by Defense Minister Hamada

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
April 8, 2009

The governments of Japan and the United States are now coordinating a visit to the United States by Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada during this May's Golden Week holidays to hold talks with Defense Secretary Robert Gates, the Yomiuri Shimbun learned.

19) Abe, Maehara to visit U.S.

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)
April 8, 2009

Appearing on a BS program yesterday, former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe revealed a plan to make a trip to the United States along with Seiji Maehara, former president of the main opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), and others. According to informed sources,

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several lawmakers from the two Diet chambers, including Abe and Maehara, will visit Washington and other cities from April 14 to the 18th. Since Abe and Maehara have similar views on foreign and security policy, their planned U.S. visit will likely prompt all sorts of conjectures.

20) MSDF chief of staff indicates possibility of weapons use by SDF troops on anti-piracy mission

MAINICHI (Page 1) (Excerpts)
April 8, 2009

Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) Chief of Staff Adm. Keiji Akahoshi told a press conference yesterday that MSDF troops on an anti-piracy mission off the coast of Somalia would be allowed to use weapons in self-defense or averting imminent danger if they are attacked by pirates while they are escorting ships that fall outside the list of escorted vessels.

A provision in the Self-Defense Forces Law for maritime patrols, however, allows the MSDF to guard only Japan-related vessels, such as Japanese-registered ships and foreign ships carrying Japanese cargo. The provision also prohibits troops from launching a damaging attack unless it is for legitimate self-defense or averting imminent danger.

Early on April 4, Japan time, an MSDF vessel was asked over the radio for help by a Singaporean-flag tanker. The MSDF vessel closed in on the unidentified ship and repelled it with a warning.

21) Venezuelan president praises Obama's goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons

MAINICHI (Page 6) (Full)
April 8, 2009

In a press conference in Tokyo yesterday, visiting Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez praised U.S. President Barack Obama's goal announced on April 5 of eliminating all nuclear weapons across the globe. He said: "That is very good. The declaration by the president of the United States, which has once used nuclear weapons, is very encouraging." But he added: "The U.S. should make an apology to Japan for its past dropping of atomic bombs."

Chavez is known for his anti-U.S. stance, but he expressed his expectations on President Obama, remarking: "The new U.S. government has no preconceived idea."

22) Amano fielded again

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
April 8, 2009

The Foreign Ministry on April 7 announced that it has once again fielded Yikiya Amono, ambassador to the Permanent Mission of Japan to the International Organizations in Vienna, as a candidate in the election to choose the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) director general. The voting day has yet to be set.

23) Government, ruling parties eye 5 PERCENT redemption from state coffers for consumer purchases of energy-saving electronic appliances

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NIKKEI (Top play) (Lead para.)
April 8, 2009

The government and the ruling parties on April 7 decided to include a new system to promote the dissemination of energy-saving-type electronic appliances in an additional economic stimulus package. To be precise, it will pass on 5 PERCENT of sales prices to purchasers in the form of eco-action points (EAP) at government expense. EAP can be exchanged for other items. The ratio of redemption will be increased for purchases of flat-screen television sets for digital territorial broadcasting. The government will earmark related budgetary funds in the fiscal 2009 extra budget. The new system will be put into practice in July at the earliest. Funding resources worth 370 billion yen have also been secured for the promotion of purchases of eco-friendly compact cars.

ZUMWALT